

Conventional Force Reductions on German Soil: A Concrete Proposal

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With the disappearance of Soviet and American medium-range missiles from Europe, conventional disarmament will move to the fore of Continental security. Ratification of the INF agreement undoubtedly gives new impetus to the East-West negotiations to reduce Warsaw Pact and NATO forces in the vast area from the Atlantic to the Urals.¹ Improved prospects for movement on both sides in this area would appear to be the result of several factors: the changed domestic political environment in the United States; the American perception of greater flexibility in Moscow based on the relative ease with which the INF treaty was negotiated; and a renewed Soviet interest in assuaging West European fears of the Pact in order to gain access to the economic, technological, and managerial resources of Western Europe and, especially, of West Germany.

The American imperative to reduce defense spending is, of course, not new. What is new, however, is the emerging political consensus for real cuts in defense over the next two to three years. Conscious of America's potentially grave budget situation, policymakers of both parties will be more likely than ever to press for a diminished American share in what is viewed chiefly as Europe's defense.²

In public pronouncements General Secretary Gorbachev has strongly endorsed the concept of conventional arms control in central Europe, but none of his or the Soviet General Staff's rhetoric suggests that an era of resource stringency will cause the type of organizational contraction that reduced the size of Soviet conventional forces in the 1950s. However, closer economic ties with Western Europe—particularly West Germany, which is the Soviet Union's largest trading partner—are vital to the success of Gorbachev's plan to restructure and reinvigorate the Soviet economy.³ Therefore, it

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is increasingly clear that Gorbachev is placing greater emphasis on the Soviet Union's economic relationship with Western Europe.

Still, the economic stimulus for cooperation with Western Europe and the desire to retain the political advantages of theater-wide conventional military superiority confront Gorbachev with two serious dilemmas: how to reduce the size of Soviet conventional forces in central Europe and assuage West European fears of the Warsaw Pact without altering the existing balance of forces and risking a loosening of control in Eastern Europe; and how to prevent a reduction of US ground forces in central Europe from promoting closer Franco-German military cooperation or causing the West Germans to reconsider their earlier renunciation of nuclear weapons.

The environment outlined above suggests that conventional force reductions in Europe are not only possible, they may well be likely. But can negotiations on such reductions be directed in ways that actually increase the security of the United States and its allies? This article argues in the affirmative, so long as the negotiations are correctly focused on asymmetrical reductions in Soviet forces deployed in Germany. An analysis of the goals and distribution of Soviet military power in central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that a reduction in Soviet offensive capabilities in East Germany is clearly in NATO's interests. Such asymmetrical reductions in forces so critical to Soviet plans normally would be unthinkable from Moscow's perspective, but in the current environment they may well be achievable because of Moscow's interest in expanding access to European technology. On the other hand, if negotiations are not focused on the balance of forces in East and West Germany, and are organized instead around a more ephemeral concept encompassing the Atlantic to the Urals, the resulting force reductions may actually reduce NATO security.

Soviet Force Development: Political Purposes and Military Means

The questions of how the United States should proceed with negotiations to reduce Soviet and American ground forces in East and West Germany and what these reductions should achieve are tied to an understanding of the present Soviet approach to conventional force development, the East European challenge to Soviet power and influence, and the German Democratic

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Republic's role in Soviet military strategy. In this regard, it is incumbent upon Western observers to determine the compatibility of Gorbachev's pronouncements on the subject of conventional arms control with Soviet actions to develop conventional forces and the military doctrine to rationalize their utility. The evidence indicates that the Soviet General Staff continues to move in a direction that has little in common with popular views in the West.⁴

It is hardly a revelation to state that the primary method of attack for the Warsaw Pact forces remains the high-speed, tank-heavy offensive. On the other hand, any suggestion that the Soviets would go to nearly any lengths to avoid the use of nuclear weapons or that the Soviet General Staff would prefer to rely more on forces-in-being than on total mobilization would evoke, at the very least, a skeptical response in many Western military circles. Yet, there is compelling evidence for these views.

While there were grounds to question the seriousness of the Soviet General Staff's interests in avoiding the use of nuclear weapons in a general European war during the 1970s, there is now a substantial body of evidence to suggest that earlier Soviet views on the utility of nuclear weapons in the European theater have been discarded. Contemporary Soviet military elites have asserted quite openly that war without the use of nuclear weapons is not only conceivable, but that the Soviet armed forces must be reorganized and re-equipped to fight it. Indeed, it seems that the Soviets believe it is in their interest to impose a strictly conventional war on NATO in the event of a conflict. Although Marshal Ogarkov, Marshal Akhromeyev, General Lushev, and Colonel General Gareev are the best known and most recent proponents for this view, the change in orientation may actually be traced to an even earlier period.⁵ Not surprisingly, this modification in the Soviet view of future war has found expression in the Soviet approach to the command, control, and development of the Pact's Soviet and non-Soviet conventional forces. In this effort Marshal Ogarkov has been the main proponent for an offensive military strategy that envisions the subordination of integrated, multinational Pact fronts to a new intermediate command structure within specific geographical limits. The Soviet and East European forces in the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the western Soviet Union constitute the assets of their western theater of strategic military action.

In the drive to forge a more cohesive and responsive Pact force structure, Marshal Ogarkov has chosen to emphasize the technological modernization and integration of Soviet and non-Soviet forces in central Europe. Ogarkov's demand that these forces attain the highest possible state of combat readiness in peacetime and be prepared to move within 24 to 48 hours' notice against the West also suggests that the Soviets' former reliance on total mobilization has given way to new notions of pre-war mobilization in which a conflict in the European theater would be decided primarily by the Warsaw

Pact's tank-heavy forces-in-being with the aid of new generations of high-technology conventional weapons.⁶

Colonel General Gareev, Deputy Chief of the Soviet General Staff, has given considerable thought to the notion of pre-war mobilization and the tactical and strategic measures that presumably would compensate for the absence of overwhelming numerical superiority. In his book, *M. V. Frunze: Military Theorist*, he suggests that "a majority of the measures to cover, mobilize, concentrate, and deploy the armed forces in the theater of military operations can be carried on ahead of time and merely completed in the threatening period."⁷ According to Gareev, mobilization potential is no longer as important as it once was to victory in a strictly conventional campaign limited to the European theater of strategic military action. Moreover, General Gareev's discussion of future war and Marshal Ogarkov's demand for higher states of readiness and tighter integration of Soviet and non-Soviet ground forces in the Pact's forward-deployed formations suggest that the Soviet attack scenario for which NATO is best prepared may be the least likely contingency.⁸

General Gareev and Marshal Ogarkov appear to have concluded that a deliberate Soviet attack with fully mobilized forces is the kind of war with which NATO is best prepared to cope. This interpretation is supported by the Soviet General Staff's acute sensitivity to the potential consequences of incautious war mobilization and the Soviet opinion that standing forces rather than mobilized reserves will play the decisive role in a crisis. While there is room for discussion concerning how far the existing Soviet force posture has already moved in the direction of this new doctrinal goal, the aim is unmistakable. Soviet military thought is based on the assumption that if the alternative were ignominious retreat from the "gains of socialism" in a crisis, the Soviet state would like to be able to opt for a military solution in central Europe and to strike before NATO were even partially mobilized and, therefore, more survivable.⁹

Viewed in the context of Ogarkov's and Gareev's remarks, the congruity of thought and action in the contemporary Soviet approach to conventional force development is really quite striking. The emphasis on non-nuclear conflict has been evident for some time in the scenarios that Warsaw Pact maneuvers employ in joint field training of Soviet and non-Soviet ground forces.¹⁰ Also, the Soviet desire to adopt the measures that General Gareev deems critical to success in a future conflict has led to fundamental changes in the Soviet-East European military relationship within the framework of the Warsaw Pact military alliance. According to Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, a former Polish General Staff officer who fled to the West in 1981, these changes are contained in the Warsaw Pact's wartime statute, which sets forth the intra-Pact command relationships that will obtain after hostilities commence. Kuklinski says that the statute provides for the command of the Polish armed forces to pass into the hands of the Soviet High Command in Moscow

during wartime. However, since the implementation of this statute in 1979, the Soviets have been working to gain permanent operational control of the Pact's non-Soviet forces in order to bypass national command and to relegate the national military leadership of the non-Soviet states to the function of ensuring logistical support for the non-Soviet troops under Soviet command.¹¹

The Soviets' interest in gaining permanent operational control of the Pact's non-Soviet forces is not new, but their decision to operate without substantial Soviet reinforcement has placed the General Staff in the unhappy position of having to rely more on non-Soviet forces to significantly augment their regional military effort and on an essentially non-Soviet infrastructure for the westward movement of Soviet supplies and follow-on forces along a 1000-kilometer line of communications. Thus, in Eastern Europe, the old political requirement to preserve Soviet control has coincided with a developing Soviet interest in transforming the Pact's doctrine for coalition warfare into a rationale for tightly integrated and Soviet-controlled multinational armed forces.¹² However, with the partial exception of the East Germans, whose defense spending has generally kept pace with Soviet requirements, most tank and artillery holdings in the other non-Soviet forces are two or three generations behind those of the Soviets.¹³ Although the Soviets will probably decide in the future upon a policy of selective modernization limited to mission-essential, non-Soviet ground units, this approach will still not solve the Soviets' security problem in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Viewed from this standpoint, Soviet goals as dictated by doctrine and strategy are far ahead of Soviet means.¹⁴ These comments notwithstanding, the Soviets' prospects for success are not all bad. The Soviet military position in the GDR has little in common with the rest of the region.

The GDR poses a special threat to NATO because the elements of socio-economic stability, German military efficiency, and a preponderance of Soviet military power make it a stable base for the projection of Soviet military power westward. Thanks to economic growth rates which the GDR's Pact neighbors can only envy, East German defense spending for military modernization has been sustained at a rate second only to the Soviets'. But-tressed by a program of societal militarization and the most efficient suppression of internal political opposition and free speech in the Soviet bloc, the GDR seems capable of coping with any form of internal unrest.¹⁵

Militarily, the Soviet forces elsewhere in Eastern Europe almost shrink to insignificance next to the Soviet forces in the GDR. In case of war with NATO, the 19 combat divisions, air, and artillery assets of the Group of Soviet Forces in the GDR (GSFG) would spearhead the offensive. Reinforced from the nearby Northern Group of Soviet Forces in western Poland and together with East Germany's six regular and four reserve divisions, border and paramilitary forces, and Polish elite units, the GSFG's armies would form the basis for the Pact's two largest and most forward-deployed fronts. Equally

important for Western military planners is the fact that the GSFG provides the units that constitute the Pact's operational maneuver groups.¹⁶ Still, even the impressive concentration of Soviet military power in the GDR could not sustain an offensive against NATO for very long without the active and competent support of the GDR military state. Although the GDR's armed forces are among the Pact's smallest, the GDR maintains by far the most effective reserve mobilization system in Europe. Reserve mobilization exercises are so frequent and regular that, according to at least one source, the four reserve divisions could probably be readied for action undetected and deployed within 48 hours!¹⁷ It is therefore no surprise that the GDR's ground forces are operationally subordinate to the Soviet High Command nor that East German troops are kept "in a state of continuous alert which even Soviet troops—with the exception of the airborne forces—do not achieve."¹⁸

The Soviet emphasis on the GDR's role in military mobilization and preparation for offensive operations against the West has resulted in tight-knit cooperation with the GSFG and the pre-positioning of large Soviet war stocks. The enormous Soviet military presence has also significantly expanded the role and influence of the East German military in the GDR. The proliferation of uniformed officers in key positions of civil administration, the state planning commission, and the various ministries of foreign trade, construction, and transportation—combined with the consistently strong military presence in the ruling Communist Party's central committee and politburo—suggest a level of military-political integration without parallel in the Warsaw Pact.¹⁹ When the additional armed organs of the GDR are added to its army's ten divisions, the total number of East German men under arms during mobilization swells to a massive 1.272 million.²⁰ As noted earlier, some observers believe that East German mobilization could be effective within 48 hours. By comparison, in West Germany a seven-day mobilization produces 1.045 million men under arms.²¹

All of these points make it easy to understand why one analyst suggested that without the GDR, the Warsaw Pact as a military alliance would be irrelevant.²² Given the disparities in force modernization and socioeconomic difficulties in the rest of the region, it seems likely that the most important mission of the Soviet and non-Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia and Hungary during an unreinforced attack on NATO would be to prevent German and American combat power in Bavaria from significantly influencing the strategically critical battle in northern Germany.

Recognition of the primary importance of the concentration of military power in the GDR to the success of Soviet military strategy in the current environment of high-technology conventional warfare has come only slowly. Such belatedness stems from a reluctance to acknowledge the developing emphasis in Soviet military thought on forces-in-being and to differentiate between the various groups of Soviet and non-Soviet forces in their

western theater. Yet, a careful analysis of Soviet doctrine and force development makes it clear that the preponderance of Soviet military power in the GDR must be the target of conventional arms control negotiations with Moscow. This recognition necessarily refocuses attention on the short-warning, strictly conventional attack in a crisis. The GSFG, it is apparent, is the instrument by which such an attack would be mounted.

Coping with the Soviet Threat through Arms Control

Soviet enthusiasm for the Atlantic-to-the-Urals negotiating forum is understandable since it shifts attention to militarily less-significant formations in the western Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and tends to obscure the real threat to NATO in the GDR. The Soviets probably hope that broadening participation in this new negotiating forum will further complicate the issues that were under study in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations and avoid any pressure to scale down the GSFG's offensive force structure. This tactic was implicit in Gorbachev's 18 April 1986 speech to the GDR's Communist Party congress when he called for the simultaneous disbandment of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO and in his Budapest proposal that NATO and the Pact demobilize up to 150,000 troops in Europe within a year.²³

Publicly, these exhortations to disarm allow the Soviets to appeal over the heads of elected Western governments to European populations obsessed with the fear of war. In a larger European forum, these statements maintain the fiction that the Warsaw Pact countries in central Europe are sovereign states and that the position of the Pact's non-Soviet forces should be considered analogous to the British and French forces in NATO. Since the broader scope for negotiations increases their complexity and political significance, it also reduces the likelihood of reaching an agreement. This means that there must be a trade-off between scope and practicality for conventional arms control negotiations to succeed.²⁴

For these reasons, the United States must either devise a more appropriate forum for negotiating conventional arms reductions or set forth a proposal within the new Atlantic-to-the-Urals framework that would limit direct participation in the negotiations to the United States, the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the German Democratic Republic. The German communists in East Berlin have insisted for years that a European war must never again be launched from German soil and their Soviet sponsors, cynically of course, have consistently lent public support to this view.²⁵

If the Soviets and their German allies are serious about preventing another war in Europe, then they should be prepared to publicly recognize that another European war would, in fact, emanate primarily from German soil and that a real end to the cold war will come only with a treaty to reduce gradually the Soviet and American military presence in Germany and a related agreement

to establish ceilings for the number of German divisions in East and West Germany. The Soviets have wanted to impose individual national ceilings in the MBFR negotiations in order to prevent the West German increment in NATO from increasing in proportion to other West European armies. Why not partially concede this to the Soviets? Given the demographic constraints that a falling birth rate has already imposed on the German ground forces in East and West, an agreement to freeze the size of the *Bundeswehr* and the East German army at current or new levels should not be difficult to negotiate.²⁶

The more difficult problem, of course, lies in what form Soviet and American reductions should take. For NATO, limiting the strength of the GSFG's forces-in-being during a future crisis is vital because it reduces the strength of the primary offensive Soviet formation, denies the Soviets the element of surprise, and raises doubts about the ability of the Soviet High Command to achieve a fruitful victory with Soviet military force. However, it is unlikely that Gorbachev is prepared to establish a timetable for the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Germany. An initial American proposal must, therefore, be more modest in scope. Proposed reductions in Soviet and American ground forces in Germany will have to be incremental in character and acknowledge the importance of the overall Soviet military presence in the region to the security of Eastern Europe's communist parties. Also, a fresh proposal will have to address the contentious issues which have obstructed progress in the MBFR forum. Other considerations, such as NATO's ability to verify Soviet compliance, the proposal's effect on our German ally, and European security in general, will also be important in assessing the worth of a new American proposal.

The nature of such a proposal will depend on what kinds of forces the United States deems crucial to the success of a Soviet short-warning attack. Tactical air forces alone can exact only attrition, and reductions in qualitatively superior American airpower can benefit only the Soviets. Further, air power is a fluid asset whose presence or absence is difficult to monitor. Clearly, the heart of Soviet strategy toward Europe is their ground forces. The critical attributes of Moscow's short-warning attack option, apart from high-technology conventional missile strikes, are maneuver, rapid exploitation, and subsequent occupation of territory by tank, motorized infantry, and airborne/airmobile troops. All such operations depend on well-trained troops, supporting firepower, and integrated command and control. In central and Eastern Europe, the GSFG is the formation that provides these capabilities, and the core of the GSFG's offensive striking power is the tank army.

Subtraction of a four-division tank army from the GSFG would be advantageous to NATO for several reasons: The Soviets prefer to lead with tank-heavy forces. The tank army is close to the inter-German border and its divisions are visible and thus easier to verify than smaller, more-specialized support units or individual soldiers.²⁷ More important, when the warfare is

viewed in maneuver terms, the division is the main combat maneuver formation in both armies. Although American divisions are on average larger than Soviet divisions, the Soviet division still has the offensive capability to conduct sustained, independent combat operations for three to five days.

As is the case in most of the central region, the Soviet advantage in division-sized units—19 divisions to four-plus American divisions—is considerable. This condition establishes the requirement for asymmetrical reductions—that is, the Soviets should give up more than the United States.²⁸ The concept of asymmetrical reductions has been agreed to in principle in the MBFR talks.²⁹ To a considerable extent, the application of this principle to American and Soviet ground forces in Germany is more easily justified than in a larger forum that incorporates other NATO and Pact forces into the equation. This raises the question, What should the United States be prepared to offer in return for the elimination of a four-division Soviet tank army from the GDR?

It would be strategically desirable—and fair—from a US standpoint to limit American reductions to the equivalent of one armored division. An examination of one way in which defense analysts have attempted to compare the combat power of Soviet, American, and German divisions suggests that this arrangement within the German territorial framework for negotiations is hardly inequitable. Since 1971, armored division equivalents have been used in many official US studies to assess the relative strength of ground forces.³⁰ The estimates are based on standard measures of weapon effectiveness developed by the US Army. The figures presented here are derived from a refinement of that approach, with the value of a West German armored division—arbitrarily set at 1.00—providing the standard for comparison. According to this approach, the total combat power of the US ground forces in Germany is equivalent to 6.81. With the same standard of measure, the GSFG's ground combat power equals 20.007. Thus, the GSFG-to-US 7th Army ratio is 3.629 to 1. If this analytical approach is applied to the Soviet 3d shock army and the US 1st Armored Division, the results are similar. The US 1st Armored Division earns a rating of 1.408, and the three tank and one motorized rifle divisions of the 3d shock army earn a combined rating of 4.704, producing a ratio of 3.341 to 1.³¹

Agreements on appropriate ratios for force reductions are only one dimension of the problem. The other key to success in asymmetrical force reductions will be what happens to the deleted Soviet and American formations once they leave Germany. Gorbachev has used the term "demobilize." Precisely what he means is unclear. The United States may want to convert the returning division to an active reserve status. If the Soviets acted comparably, this would mean storing the army's equipment in the Soviet Union and converting the 3d shock army to a category III status somewhere in the western Soviet Union.³²

Historically, the United States has objected to repositioning Soviet units in European Russia on the grounds that Soviet reinforcements can reach the GDR far more quickly and easily than American reinforcements can reach West Germany. This traditional assessment is based on three central premises: (1) that US reinforcements are crucial to European defense in a short-warning attack; (2) that NATO is incapable of detecting the movement forward of a tank army from the western Soviet Union and reacting to it; and (3) that the Soviets would risk mounting an attack only after full mobilization. None of these arguments is persuasive.

But each of these premises is questionable. First, American resupply and reinforcement during the initial phase of a short-warning Soviet attack on West Germany would be at best tenuous. Port facilities are extremely vulnerable in such circumstances, and it is doubtful that the United States could provide enough reinforcements in the initial phase of the attack to play a critical role. Second, NATO's ground defense depends primarily on the speed and effectiveness of West Germany's military mobilization capability. While the FRG's reserve mobilization system may not be quite as good as the GDR's, it is certainly not far behind and could be made better with minor modifications. Third, the type of Soviet offensive that NATO is most capable of coping with is the attack after full mobilization. As already mentioned, the Soviets have recognized the danger of attacking West Germany after it has detected Soviet mobilization and begun to mobilize its own forces. The point of the three foregoing counter-arguments is simply that the prospective return of a US armored division to Stateside poses no convincing bar to successful NATO defense in a short-warning scenario, provided a Soviet shock army is removed to the Soviet west in category III status.

This is not to say that the indicated reductions on both sides would end all problems. For example, the Soviets will want assurances that French ground forces will not fill the vacuum created by the absence of the American armored division, and the West Germans will want to retain the flexibility to reposition ground forces to meet potential threats along the Czechoslovakian and Austrian borders. For these reasons, commitments from the two German states not to add new formations to their force structures or to station other allied forces on their territory in order to compensate for the removal of Soviet and American forces must not prohibit the Germans in both camps from repositioning their existing ground forces.

On balance, the 3.4-to-1 reduction as described seems to simplify many of the tasks associated with previous negotiations. It addresses the questions of asymmetry in terms of combat power and geography, which have stalled the MBFR talks.³³ Further, the proposal avoids the military data dispute which plagued MBFR for more than ten years by shifting the focus to large, well-defined military formations. This approach clearly removes some of the requirements for intrusive verification that were unacceptable to the

Soviets in the last two years of the MBFR talks. In any case, whatever the obstacles to on-site verification, a regime limited to German soil cannot be more problematic than developing a similar regime for all of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals! Further, the new Soviet flexibility on verification as seen in the INF agreement is a favorable omen.

Improved strategic technical means of verification and the Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe have enhanced the capability to monitor Soviet troop concentrations. Short-notice on-site inspections are not yet "business as usual" in the central region, but they could be a model for guaranteeing compliance in the post-reduction environment. Inspections should supplement the existing measures, granting frequent inspector access to entry and exit points for Soviet forces in Germany before, during, and after major exercises. They should make the sudden influx of reinforcements from the western Soviet military district or the gradual increase in the number of troops in the GSFG far easier to detect than has been the case in the past. Beyond these points there are other reasons why this approach is attractive and could succeed.

- In addition to confining the negotiations to the area of greatest threat to European security, the simplified diplomatic structure for negotiation has a much greater chance of succeeding. Witness how rapidly Bonn was able to move forward on the Pershing missile issue in the final months of the INF talks.

- The reduction of Soviet military power in the GSFG does not degrade the internal policing capabilities of the groups of Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. As a result, Eastern Europe's ruling elites should welcome a reduction of forces that reduces the likelihood of war without jeopardizing their regimes' security.

- An agreement that reduces the number of Soviet combat troops facing NATO requires greater Soviet reliance on the Pact's non-Soviet ground forces in a crisis or a war. Given traditional Soviet concerns about the utility of many of these formations, this probably enhances Western security.

- This proposal tests the sincerity of Soviet pronouncements on reducing the likelihood of war in Europe. A Soviet refusal to negotiate reductions in the GSFG's combat power would make apparent to the West European public that the Soviets have no intention of removing those forces which most threaten NATO.

- West Germany's leadership has made a reduced Soviet military threat a precondition for expanded trade and technological cooperation with the Soviet Union.³⁴ Clearly, this new proposal coincides with West German foreign policy objectives and the American interest in reducing its share of the European defense burden without conceding military and, hence, political dominance in central Europe to the Soviet state.

- East Berlin would welcome the withdrawal of a tank army from the GDR. Soviet forces in the GDR are supplied largely from GDR stocks, a point of considerable friction in Soviet-East German relations.³⁵ In addition to reducing the logistical burden on GDR resources, a reduced Soviet military presence would also create more maneuver room for the GDR's leaders in their relations with the Federal Republic.

To sum up, this approach is more than simply a way to limit the drain on increasingly constrained US defense resources. It also discourages continued complacency in West European conventional ground force development flowing from NATO's overreliance on American nuclear deterrence by forcing the European publics to differentiate between Soviet declaratory policy and actual military strategy. In the course of the negotiations, the US and West German representatives should point out that unless reductions occur on both sides of the inter-German border, the Warsaw Pact will probably face an even more unpalatable calculus of the balance of forces—one involving the French. Although true integration of Western Europe's defense effort is hardly imminent, the political, economic and strategic conditions for such cooperation may be greater now than at any time in the last 20 years. In the absence of this agreement, the pressure on the West German government to seek closer military cooperation with the French can only grow. While the historical basis for the success of such a development is thin, the Soviets will have to take it seriously.³⁶

Lastly, American policymakers should keep in mind that this proposal will overlap with the Soviet requirement to address a lengthy agenda of economic and security issues that have accumulated in Eastern Europe over the last two decades. Current Soviet force development goals threaten to sabotage domestic consumption in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the GDR. If unchecked, the selective modernization of non-Soviet forces in the Pact's northern tier will only exacerbate the current economic decline in the region. Eastern Europe's ruling parties are not unaware that economic conditions helped to stimulate the forces of political and social unrest that led to crises in Soviet-East European relations in 1953, 1956, 1968 and 1981. The recent Solidarity strikes in Poland lend further point to this observation. More important, Eastern Europe's leaders know that no solution short of one designed to ameliorate their countries' deteriorating economic situation will prevent future outbreaks of anti-Soviet violence in the region. From the East European standpoint, reduced numbers of Soviet forces in the GDR will not only help to constrain the Soviet military's economically wasteful program, it will also open the door to sorely needed economic cooperation with Western Europe as well. Though the negotiations will be difficult, an economically weakened Soviet imperium may at last provide enough incentive for the negotiations to succeed.

Final Observations

At a time when the United States is focusing much of its attention on its budget deficit, Central America, strategic arms control, and the inauguration of a new president, the Soviets are devising a negotiating strategy that will seek to limit the room for the United States to maneuver both militarily and politically. It is quite possible that in the year ahead Secretary Gorbachev will try to pre-empt disarmament talks in the new Atlantic-to-the-Urals framework by unilaterally withdrawing ground troops from one of the smaller Soviet complements in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. Unless the United States can develop a fresh proposal of its own, America's leadership may find itself reeling once again under the weight of a new Soviet propaganda offensive to woo public opinion in Europe and the United States.³⁷

Of course, some critics will insist that the military confrontation in Europe is as likely to shrink through independent actions on both sides taken to rationalize forces and to cope with economic stringencies as it is through negotiated reductions.³⁸ Yet, this presupposes that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has abandoned its historical determination to keep armed force as an instrument of policy, subordinate to political control. Soviet pronouncements on the probability of non-nuclear war and the current goals of Soviet force development suggest a very different conclusion. In other words, if Gorbachev looks westward in the 1990s and sees a weakened American military establishment in Germany that is less capable of doing whatever needs to be done to help NATO prevail in a conventional military confrontation with the Soviets, then Gorbachev may become notably more sanguine about the political utility of military power in central Europe. After all, the Soviet incentive to make concessions in exchange for reductions in American military power in Europe will be "small indeed if the United States military establishment contracts in any case."³⁹

NOTES

1. See John Fialka, "Talks Advance to Trim Forces in Europe," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 December 1987, p. 10.
2. Peter Schmitz, *Defending the NATO Alliance: Global Implications* (Washington: National Defense Univ. Press, 1987), p. 15.
3. Angela Stent, "Soviet Relations With Europe Are Changing," *Europe*, January-February 1988, p. 51.
4. Robert Legvold, "Gorbachev's New Approach to Conventional Arms Control," *The Harriman Institute Forum*, 1 (January 1988), 1.
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27. Steven Canby, "Mutual Force Reductions: A Military Perspective," *International Security*, 2 (Winter 1978), 128.
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29. The proposal tabled by US Ambassador Blackwill and Soviet Ambassador Mikhailov in the fall of 1986 provided for asymmetrical reductions. The agreement broke down on the question of intrusive verification. This principle also guided Soviet thinking during the INF negotiations.
30. US Army, Concepts Analysis Agency, *Weapon Effectiveness Indices/Weighted Unit Values* (1974), I, 26.
31. Dwight Raymond, "Terrain Effects and Ground Force Capability," unpublished paper, University of Maryland School of Public Affairs, May 1987.
32. In the Soviet army, category I units are at or near full strength and could be readied for combat in 24 hours or less; category II units are 50- to 75-percent manned and would require at least a week's preparation for action; and category III units are 25-percent manned and their equipment is either unavailable or obsolete.
33. David Skaggs, "Update: MBFR," *Military Review*, 67 (February 1987), 85-86.
34. See reports on Franz Josef Strauss's meeting with Gorbachev in Moscow. Strauss made this point quite directly to Gorbachev. *Nordbayerische Zeitung*, 30 December 1987, p. 1.
35. See former East German Major Otto Ponert's remarks in a Munich ARD television interview, trans. in *FBIS-DR-EEU*, 15 August 1985, p. E-1.
36. This impression was conveyed to the author during discussions with Pact military representatives to the MBFR talks in Vienna during March 1987. For a good discussion of trends in FRG-Franco military cooperation, see John L. Clarke, "New Directions in Franco-German Military Cooperation," *Parameters*, 18 (September 1988), 76-86.
37. See Thomas F. O'Boyle, "Gorbachev Sways German Missile Town: Residents Credit Him for the Removal of Pershings," *The Wall Street Journal*, 7 January 1988, p. 16.
38. Jonathan Dean, "Military Security in Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, 66 (Fall 1987), 40.
39. Christoph Bertram, "Europe's Security Dilemmas," *Foreign Affairs*, 65 (Summer 1987), 956.